

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications network including a network based telephone answering system to which calls for a particular network destination may be diverted, said destination being identified by a single telephone number used by a plurality of called customers, the network including control means programmable by customer action at the network destination to select conditions under which some or all calls for the destination are diverted, the telephone answering system further including:

means selectively to store respective messages and to associate such messages with a particular one of a said plurality of customers of the destination in response to predetermined characteristics for an incoming call, and

means to selectively play messages for a particular one of said plurality of customers only on receipt of signals identifying a said particular one of said plurality of customers.

2. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications network as ~~claimed~~ in claim 1, in which the telephone answering system is responsive to receipt of a diverted call to cause information identifying each of said plurality of customers to be transmitted to a calling customer, said system connecting means being responsive to calling customer

action to associate a subsequently deposited message with a particular one of said plurality of customers.

3. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications network as ~~elaimed~~ in claim 1, in which the telephone answering system is responsive to network signals identifying the calling party to associate a message received during the same call with a particular one of the plurality of customers.

B9 4. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications network as ~~elaimed~~ in claim 3 1, in which calls are selectively diverted to the telephone answering system or are connected to the network destination in dependence upon the network signals identifying the calling party line.

5. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications network as ~~elaimed~~ in claim 1, in which:

calls for at least one of the plurality of customers of ~~the~~ a particular network destination are ~~required to be~~ diverted to the telephone answering system while calls for at least one other of the plurality of customers for that ~~are to be connected to the~~ particular network destination are not so diverted.

the network being responsive to calls for the particular network destination to provide information to the calling party line identifying each of the plurality of customers

and responding to customer reaction to such information ~~thereto~~ to connect the call either to the network destination or to the telephone answering system.

6. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications network as ~~elaimed~~ in claim 2, in which, in the absence of a reaction to the information provided, a subsequently stored message is associated with more than one of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination.

7. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications network as ~~elaimed~~ in claim 2, in which the telephone answering system is responsive to signalling from a calling party to associate a subsequently deposited message with each of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination.

8. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications network as ~~elaimed~~ in claim 1, in which the telephone answering system is responsive to signalling identifying a particular one of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination to play back respective messages stored for that customer.

9. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications network as ~~elaimed~~ in claim 8, in which, ~~subsequent~~ subsequent to delivery of messages for the particular customer, messages not associated with any particular customer or associated with all of the

plurality of customers using said particular network destination are played to the calling customer.

10. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications network as ~~elaimed~~ in claim 8, in which, subsequent to playing messages for the identified one of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination, the system causes a voice announcement indicative of the presence or absence of messages for other ~~users~~ customers at the same network destination.

11. (New) A method of operating a telecommunications network based telephone answering system to which calls for a particular network destination may be diverted, said destination being identified by a single telephone number used by a plurality of called customers, the network being programmable by customer action at the network destination to select conditions under which some or all calls for the destination are diverted, the method comprising:

selectively storing respective messages and associating such messages with a particular one of said plurality of customers of the destination in response to predetermined characteristics for an incoming call, and

selectively playing messages for a particular one of said plurality of customers only on receipt of signals identifying said particular one of said plurality of customers.

12. (New) A method as in claim 11, in which the telephone answering system is responsive to receipt of a diverted call to cause information identifying each of said plurality of customers to be transmitted to a calling customer, said system being responsive to calling customer action to associate a subsequently deposited message with a particular one of said plurality of customers.

13. (New) A method as in claim 11, in which the telephone answering system is responsive to network signals identifying the calling party to associate a message received during the same call with a particular one of the plurality of customers.

B9 14. (New) A method as in claim 11, in which calls are selectively diverted to the telephone answering system or are connected to the network destination in dependence upon the network signals identifying the calling party line.

15. (New) A method as in claim 11, in which:  
calls for at least one of the plurality of customers of a particular network destination are diverted to the telephone answering system while calls for at least one other of the plurality of customers for that particular network destination are not so diverted,  
the network being responsive to calls for the particular network destination to provide information to the calling party line identifying each of the plurality of customers

and responding to customer reaction to such information to connect the call either to the network destination or to the telephone answering system.

16. (New) A method as in claim 12, in which, in the absence of a reaction to the information provided, a subsequently stored message is associated with more than one of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination.

17. (New) A method as in claim 12, in which the telephone answering system is responsive to signalling from a calling party to associate a subsequently deposited message with each of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination.

89 18. (New) A method as in claim 11, in which the telephone answering system is responsive to signalling identifying a particular one of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination to play back respective messages stored for that customer.

19. (New) A method as in claim 18, in which subsequent, to delivery of messages for the particular customer, messages not associated with any particular customer or associated with all of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination are played to the calling customer.

20. (New) A method as in claim 18, in which, subsequent to playing messages for the identified one of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination, the system causes a voice announcement indicative of the presence or absence of messages for other customers at the same network destination.

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